

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A steering wheel assembly for a vehicle comprising:
a non-circular steering wheel;
an airbag module mounted to the steering wheel, the airbag module including an airbag inflator, an inflatable airbag cushion, and an airbag module housing; and
a deployable reaction surface for providing or receiving a reaction force for the airbag cushion when deployed and inflated, further comprising trim that covers the reaction surface when the airbag cushion is undeployed and wherein the trim contacts the reaction surface when the airbag cushion is deployed, wherein the non-circular steering wheel includes two handles at the 3:00 and 9:00 positions, the handles comprised of first and second handle portions that separate to deploy a deployable reaction surface, the deployable reaction surface is a component of the airbag module, the deployable reaction surface is at least portion of the airbag module housing which deploys to provide a reaction force for the inflatable airbag cushion, the deployable reaction surface is at least two individual portions of the airbag module housing which deploy to provide a reaction force for the inflatable airbag cushion, the at least two individual portions of the airbag module housing included in the reaction surface are positioned at about the 12:00 and 6:00 positions of the steering wheel, the individual portions of the airbag module housing included in the reaction surface are movable plates, the movable plates are hinged plates positioned about the airbag cushion in the airbag module which deploy outwardly upon inflation of the airbag cushion, wherein there is no steering wheel ring in the steering wheel assembly.

Claims 2-4 (Canceled)

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The steering wheel assembly of claim 1, wherein the portion of the airbag module housing which deploys to provide a reaction force for the airbag cushion is positioned to deploy into a position about the steering wheel.

Claim 6 (Original): The steering wheel assembly of claim 5, wherein the portion of the airbag module housing deploys into a position about the steering wheel not occupied by a portion of the steering wheel and below a space occupied by the airbag cushion when inflated.

Claims 7-10 (Currently Amended)

Claim 11 (Canceled)

Claims 12-14 (Canceled)

Claim 15 (Original): The steering wheel assembly of claim 1, wherein the deployable reaction surface is a component of the steering wheel.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The steering wheel assembly of claim 15, wherein the steering wheel includes handles, wherein the first and second handle portions separate to provide a more evenly distributed reaction surface for an airbag cushion.

Claims 17-23 (Canceled)

Claim 24 (Currently Amended): An airbag module for use with a non-circular steering wheel comprising:

- an airbag inflator;

- an airbag cushion, the airbag cushion having an occupant face and a reaction face;

- an airbag module housing; and

~~a deployable reaction surface, wherein the deployable reaction surface deploys from the airbag module upon activation of the airbag module to provide a reaction surface to an inflated airbag cushion, further comprising trim that covers the reaction surface when the airbag cushion is undeployed and wherein the trim contacts the reaction surface when the airbag cushion is deployed, further comprising a non-circular steering wheel that includes two handles comprised of a first and second handle that separate to deploy the deployable reaction surface.~~

a deployable reaction surface for providing or receiving a reaction force for the airbag cushion when deployed and inflated, further comprising trim that covers the reaction surface when the airbag cushion is undeployed and wherein the trim contacts the reaction surface when the airbag cushion is deployed, wherein the non-circular steering wheel includes two handles at the 3:00 and 9:00 positions, the handles comprised of first and second handle portions that separate to deploy a deployable reaction surface, the deployable reaction surface is a component of the airbag module, the deployable reaction surface is at least portion of the airbag module housing which deploys to provide a reaction force for the inflatable airbag cushion, the deployable reaction surface is at least two individual portions of the airbag module housing which deploy to provide a reaction force for the inflatable airbag cushion, the at least two individual portions of the airbag module housing included in the reaction surface are positioned at about the 12:00 and 6:00 positions of the steering wheel, the individual portions of the airbag module housing included in the reaction surface are movable plates, wherein the movable plates are hinged plates positioned about the airbag cushion in the airbag module which deploy outwardly upon inflation of the airbag cushion, wherein there is no steering wheel ring in the steering wheel assembly.

Claim 25 (Canceled)

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): The airbag module of claim 24~~5~~, wherein the portion of the airbag module housing is one of the moveable plates positioned about the airbag cushion that deploy outwardly upon inflation of the airbag cushion.

Claim 27 (Original): The airbag module of claim 26, wherein the hinged movable plate is spring-loaded.

Claims 28-31 (Canceled)

Claims 32 -34 (Cancelled)

Claim 35 (Previously Presented): A non-circular steering wheel comprising a deployable reaction surface for a steering wheel mounted airbag cushion, wherein the airbag cushion is housed within a housing, wherein the airbag module housing comprises movable plates, wherein the non-circular steering wheel includes two handles comprised of first and second handle portions that separate to deploy a deployable reaction surface.

Claim 36 (Canceled)

Claim 37 (Previously Presented): The non-circular steering wheel of claim 35, wherein the reaction surface is a flexible sheet.

Claim 38 (Previously Presented): The non-circular steering wheel of claim 35, wherein the reaction surface is a webbing.

Claim 39 (Previously Presented): The non-circular steering wheel of claim 35, wherein the grip portions are opened by a pyrotechnic device.

Claim 40 (Previously Presented): The non-circular steering wheel of claim 35, wherein the grip portions are opened by an electronic solenoid switch.

Claims 41-46 (Canceled)

Claim 47-48 (Cancelled)

Claim 49 (Original): A non-circular steering wheel comprising two handles comprising first and second handle portions that separate to deploy two deployable reaction surfaces.

Claim 50 (Original): The non-circular steering wheel of claim 49, wherein the deployable reaction surfaces are flexible sheets.

Claim 51 (Original): The non-circular steering wheel of claim 49, wherein the deployable reaction surfaces are webbing.

Claim 52 (Original): The non-circular steering wheel of claim 49, wherein the grip portions are opened by a pyrotechnic device.

Claim 53 (Previously Presented): The non-circular steering wheel of claim 49, wherein the grip portions are opened by an electronic solenoid switch.

Claim 54 (New): A steering wheel assembly for a vehicle comprising:
a non-circular steering wheel;
an airbag module mounted to the steering wheel, the airbag module including an airbag inflator, an inflatable airbag cushion, and an airbag module housing; and
a deployable reaction surface for providing or receiving a reaction force for the airbag cushion when deployed and inflated, further comprising trim that covers the reaction surface when the airbag cushion is undeployed and wherein the trim contacts the reaction surface when the airbag cushion is deployed, wherein the non-circular steering wheel includes two handles at the 3:00 and 9:00 positions, the handles comprised of first and second handle portions that separate to deploy a deployable reaction surface, the deployable reaction surface is a component of the airbag module, the deployable reaction surface is at least portion of the airbag module housing which deploys to provide a reaction force for the inflatable airbag cushion, the deployable reaction surface is at least two individual portions of the airbag module housing

which deploy to provide a reaction force for the inflatable airbag cushion, the at least two individual portions of the airbag module housing included in the reaction surface are positioned at about the 12:00 and 6:00 positions of the steering wheel, the individual portions of the airbag module housing included in the reaction surface are movable plates, wherein the movable plates are hinged plates positioned about the airbag cushion in the airbag module which deploy outwardly upon inflation of the airbag cushion, the movable plates are spring-loaded, wherein there is no steering wheel ring in the steering wheel assembly.